

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers November 1, 2005

### Michigan News

#### **Traffic Safety Awards**

Nominations for the 2005 Outstanding Contributions to Traffic Safety Awards sponsored by the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission is now available. Please refer to the attached link for more information on how to nominate individuals, agencies or programs for outstanding traffic safety efforts. All nominations must be received on or before December 2, 2005.

[http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593\\_3504\\_8271---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3504_8271---,00.html)

#### **GM Unveils Vehicles With 'Sixth Sense'**

General Motors Co. recently unveiled a fleet of cars, which according to the car manufacturer, have a sixth sense. Using vehicle-to-vehicle communication, GM says that its vehicles can detect the position and movement of other vehicles up to a quarter of a mile away. The vehicles are equipped with a simple antenna, a computer chip and GPS technology that identifies where other vehicles are. The vehicles can anticipate and react to changing driving situations and then instantly warn the drivers with chimes, visual icons, and seat vibrations. If the driver doesn't respond to the alerts, the car can bring itself to a safe stop, avoiding a collision. For more information visit:

<http://media.gm.com/servlet/GatewayServlet?target=http://image.emerald.gm.com/gmnews/viewmonthlyreleasedetail.do?domain=74&docid=19922>

### NETS Feature

#### **Buckle up this Thanksgiving**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a new promotional planner that will provide you with some media tools and marketing material templates you can tailor to fit your company's needs in order to promote traffic safety during the Thanksgiving holiday. For more information please link to: <http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/planners/Thanksgiving05/pages/index.htm>

#### **Study Examines The Affect Of Advertising On Crashes: What Can Employers Do?**

In 2002, there were 6.5 million motor vehicle crashes in Canada and the United States, resulting in almost 45,000 deaths and 3.4 million injuries. In the United States alone, the economic costs associated with traffic crashes have been estimated at \$230-billion. Many of these crashes were attributed to speed and other aggressive driving behaviours. And according to some, these same behaviours are often exhibited in the latest car commercials.

...More [http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/110105\\_studyfeat.asp](http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/110105_studyfeat.asp)

### Latest Traffic Safety News

#### **ATRI Releases New Crash Predictor Study**

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) recently presented "Predicting Truck Crash Involvement: Developing a Commercial Driver Behavior-Based Model and Recommended Countermeasures," a crash predictor study that evaluates and links past driver traffic violations and convictions with the likelihood of being involved in a crash. The study also included best enforcement

and education programs to address potential or current driver behavior problems. The four convictions that yielded the highest likelihood of being involved in a crash included: improper or erratic lane changes, failure to yield right of way, improper turns, and failure to maintain a proper lane. For more information visit [http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news\\_id=55609&news\\_category\\_id=12](http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news_id=55609&news_category_id=12)

### **Intelligent Transportation System To Be Built In NC**

An intelligent transportation system (ITS) will soon be built along I-40 in Asheville, North Carolina. The system is intended to improve the flow of traffic in the area and is part of a road-widening project. The system design incorporates closed circuit television cameras, microwave vehicle detectors, and overhead dynamic message signs. Working together, these pieces will create a comprehensive system to monitor and manage traffic flow, convey information to drivers about road conditions, and provide an increased level of security along the highway. For more information visit: <http://www.cornet.com/pages/3667/>

### **Night Shift Workers At Higher Risk Of Accidents, Crashes**

According to research conducted by Circadian Technologies Inc., managers of shift work operations must be particularly aware of accident risks, as fatigue increases the risk of injuries and fatalities on the night shift. Not only are the frequency of accidents increased, severity is also higher in night shift accidents, as inattention often means that safety precautions are missed or reactive measures are absent. These issues are particularly important in transportation, where the likelihood of a driver falling asleep and crashing without any braking maneuver is greatly enhanced at night. As a result of this risk, their data shows that the average cost of transportation crashes that occur between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. is in excess of \$11,000, whereas the average cost of daytime accidents is about \$6,200.

### **ATA Passes Policy Mandating EDRs**

The American Trucking Association (ATA) approved a policy, contingent upon certain conditions, which endorses mandatory use of electronic on-board recorders. The ATA board of directors unanimously passed language backing EDR use to comply with the hours-of-service rule, providing that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) uses a pilot program determining its effectiveness and addresses issues to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the technology. The agency will publish a notice of proposed rulemaking in early 2006.

### **Wrist Watches To Track Convicted Alcohol-Impaired Drivers**

Thanks to advances in satellite technology, 10 convicted drunken drivers in Riverside County in California will, by the end of December, be fitted with wristwatches that contain a GPS microchip. The watches will record their every move and alert officials if they go into bars or somewhere else forbidden by the terms of their probation. In 2004, more than 1,400 people were killed in California as a result of alcohol-impaired driving collisions. More than 30,000 others were injured. Read the full article at:

<http://www.thedesertsun.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051016/NEWS08/%20510160331>

### **TV Stations Air Program To Help Senior Drivers**

In recognition of the annual "Senior Safe Mobility Day" on October 25, California public TV stations aired "The Golden Road," a 30-minute program to help senior drivers and their families correctly assess seniors' driving abilities and decrease dangers. The program is a community-based senior outreach in cooperation with the California Highway Patrol and 21st Century Insurance and produced by PBS station KQED. Read the full article at:

<http://www.orovillemr.com/Stories/0,1413,157~26686~3103944,00.html>

### **Maryland Pilot Program Tracks Drivers Via Cell Phones**

For the last six months, thousands of Baltimore-area drivers have been telling the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) how fast they were going, where they were and whether or not they were stuck in gridlock — all without even knowing it. The SHA is six months into a pilot project called the Multi-Modal Travelers Information System (MMTIS) that relies on transmissions from cellular phones to provide real-time traffic conditions in the Baltimore metropolitan area. The agency uses the information to plot real-time traffic patterns to give an accurate portrayal of state roadways. Read the full article at: [http://www.mddailyrecord.com/pub/5\\_398\\_friday/businessnews/172883-1.html](http://www.mddailyrecord.com/pub/5_398_friday/businessnews/172883-1.html)

### **Mercedes-Benz Pursues 'Flashing' Brake Lights Exemption**

Mercedes-Benz USA LLC is continuing its campaign to bring flashing brake lights to the United States. Mercedes-Benz has asked the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for a two-year exemption from federal rules that require "steady-burning" lights on vehicles. The company is counting on thousands of its customers to help convince U.S. regulators of the safety benefits of brake lights that flash rapidly in emergency stops. Read the full article at <http://www.autoweek.com/news.cms?newsId=103392>

### **Survey: Safety Features Not Prime Concern For Consumers**

A new Consumer Reports survey found that a majority of drivers aren't as interested in safety features as other features. The highest-ranked safety feature was anti-lock brakes, which came in fourth in desirability after A/C, radio, and CD player. The next most sought after safety feature was airbags, which came in at 11th place. One of the newest safety features on today's vehicles, electronic stability control, ranked 20th in the survey. Read the full article at: [http://money.cnn.com/2005/10/07/Autos/tipsandadvice/safety\\_interest/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2005/10/07/Autos/tipsandadvice/safety_interest/index.htm)

### **TRB Releases Guide For Reducing Alcohol-Related Crashes**

The Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 500, Vol. 16, Guidance for Implementation of the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan: A Guide for Reducing Alcohol-Related Collisions provides strategies that can be employed to reduce crashes involving alcohol. View the report at: [http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp\\_rpt\\_500v16.pdf](http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_500v16.pdf)

### **Groups Launch Campaign Urging Tighter HOS Rules**

Two citizens groups that advocate tighter regulation of trucking is urging Congress not to write the driver hours-of-service regulations into law and renewed their call for the U.S. Department of Transportation to rewrite the rules with a lower maximum driving time. The groups also released a ranking that lists the 50 states by the number of truck-involved highway deaths in 2004 per 100,000 in population. Read the article at: <http://www.tnews.com/members/topNews/0014061.html>

### **AAA, NFPA Issue Warning On Vehicle Fires**

AAA and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are urging vehicle owners to follow maintenance schedules and have a comprehensive inspection each year after the warranty expires to avoid vehicle fires. According to NFPA, public fire departments responded to 266,500 "highway type" vehicle fires in 2004. These fires accounted for 520 fatalities and 1,300 injuries, and were responsible for nearly a billion dollars in property damage. According to AAA, owners and technicians must be aware of damaged wiring and loose electrical connections, worn or blistered fluid lines and leaking connections, severely worn braking components, and damaged heat shields.

### **Safety Group Highlights Vehicle Safety Issues Among Obese People**

According to the Canadian Safety Council, people who weigh 242 to 262 pounds are almost two and half times more likely to die in a motor vehicle crash as people weighing less than 132 pounds. The

reasons behind this include the sheer force of the body weight, the difficulty of extracting an obese person from a damaged vehicle, and possible underlying health problems.

### **Car Care Council Hosted Fall Car Care Month**

Building on the success of National Car Care Month in April, and in response to the industry's interest in a seasonal option, the Car Care Council designated October as Fall Car Care Month to focus motorists' attention on the importance of preparing their vehicles for the upcoming winter months. Volunteers across the country conducted another round of events this past month. View the roster of events at: [http://www.aftermarket.org/forms/event\\_roster.asp](http://www.aftermarket.org/forms/event_roster.asp). To learn more about the campaign visit: [http://www.carcarecouncil.org/Fall\\_NCCM/Fall\\_NatlCarCareMonth.shtml](http://www.carcarecouncil.org/Fall_NCCM/Fall_NatlCarCareMonth.shtml)

### **News from USDOT**

#### **FMCSA Announces The Creation Of New Medical Review Board**

The just launched Medical Review Board, composed of five volunteer physicians, will advise the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) on medical issues involving commercial motor vehicle driver health and safety. The Board will assist in identifying appropriate physical qualifications, medical standards, and guidelines for drivers; educational curriculum for training medical examiners who certify that drivers meet above criteria; and functional tests for drivers with certain disabilities.

### **Work-Life:**

#### **New Report Reveals Teens' Perceptions Of Mass Transit**

The Florida Department of Transportation has released a report examining teenagers' perceptions of public transit. According to the report, issues that play a major role in determining teenagers' mode choice decisions include safety, cost, access/availability, reliability, and image. View the report at: [http://www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center/Completed\\_Proj/Summary\\_PTO/FDOT\\_BD549\\_07\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center/Completed_Proj/Summary_PTO/FDOT_BD549_07_rpt.pdf)

#### **California Strengthens Teen GDL System**

Officials in California have updated their teen graduated driver licensing system to further reduce crashes, fatalities, and injuries among teen drivers. The law, which goes into effect in January 2006, will require teen drivers to have their licenses one year before being able to drive between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. The other major provision lengthens the amount of time teen drivers must have their licenses before they can transport teen passengers without parental supervision.

#### **TRB Report To Improve The Safety Of Older Drivers**

The Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Synthesis 348: Improving the Safety of Older Road Users is now available and examines programs and policies in place across the country to improve the safety and mobility of older road users. The report documents a range of strategies and related programs under way in roadway engineering, driver licensing, public information and education, and enforcement and adjudication. View the report at: [http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp\\_syn\\_348.pdf](http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_syn_348.pdf)

#### **Teen Drivers, Passengers Face Greater Risks**

Whether traveling as drivers or passengers, teens are at a statistically higher risk of being injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash. However, in the past three decades teen motor vehicle fatalities dropped nearly 50 percent. The main causes of teen crashes are inexperience, peer pressure, risk-taking, and lack of safety precautions. Seat belt use among teens is significantly lower than that of the general population. Read the full article at: <http://www.aiada.org/article.asp?id=49769>

### International Traffic Safety News:

#### **Dublin To Get Updated, High-Tech Taxi System**

Up to €3.8m worth of technology is to be invested in a new fleet of taxis that will feature a variety of high-tech security features unseen before on Dublin streets. The fleet of taxis will be equipped with in-car closed circuit television cameras, emergency panic buttons and an integrated GPS. The company said the emphasis will be on security and driver safety. Read the full article at <http://www.siliconrepublic.com/news/news.nv?storyid=single5539>

#### **Fleet Managers Concerned About Meeting 'Duty Of Care' Responsibilities**

Fleet managers in the UK have raised concerns that the amount of work involved in meeting their duty of care to drivers is almost impossible to achieve. Their worries surfaced after hearing a list of the issues they would have to tackle, from monitoring drivers' hours and the vehicles they used, to taking care of drivers on business in private cars. The focus on health and safety and duty of care has grown significantly in recent years. It is expected that this pressure on companies will get more intense, with lawyers claiming it is only a matter of time before a company ends up in the spotlight following a crash involving one of its drivers.